

## STATE OF SOUTH DAKOTA CLASS SPECIFICATION

**Class Title:**      **Psychiatric Social Worker**

**Class Code:** 51542

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### **A. Purpose:**

Provides a combination of individual, group, and family counseling in a hospital setting and intervention in the patient's out-of-hospital environment to serve as the primary formal link between the patient, family, and community agencies.

### **B. Distinguishing Feature:**

Psychiatric Social Worker serves a dual purpose, providing counseling and therapy to patients, families, and groups; and acting as a social worker by developing financial, vocational, legal, social, recreational, and placement resources for patients.

Human Service Social Workers do not provide therapeutic psychotherapy counseling.

### **C. Functions:**

*(These are examples only; any one position may not include all of the listed examples nor do the listed examples include all functions which may be found in positions of this class.)*

1. Develops and conducts therapeutic socio-psychological treatment to enable patients to overcome psychological illness.
  - a. Provides treatment of patients in a group, family, and individual formats.
  - b. Provides written reports of treatment and progress.
2. Develops and executes discharge plans to ensure the patient's well being and security within the community.
  - a. Obtains financial, vocational, legal, social, and recreational resources.
  - b. Makes written referrals for placement purposes within and outside the facility.
  - c. Provides community awareness training for patients.
  - d. Follows up on a select group of discharged patients or patients on leave by interviewing the ex-patient, family, agencies, and employers.
  - e. Visits potential placement facilities to determine whether sufficient resources are available at that location to accommodate the patient.
3. Compiles and prepares accurate social histories, previous treatment information and patient assessments and shares findings with other members of the treatment team to determine effective treatment and therapies and to identify the patient's needs and goals.
  - a. Interviews the patient, relatives, and others associated with the family.
  - b. Contacts mental health centers and other agencies involved with the patient.
  - c. Assesses the patient's needs and collaborates with a treatment team to develop an effective therapeutic treatment.
  - d. Communicates with the families of patients through visitations, over the telephone, or by mail.
4. Consults with patient's family and/or guardian to inform them of the patient's progress and to promote the patient's best interests to ensure that the family and/or guardian maintain a therapeutic role in the patient's treatment.
5. Establishes and maintains individual patient records to ensure accurate, up-to-date account of activities for reference purposes.

6. Compiles and provides assessments and other information to community mental health centers to assist them in developing and conducting treatments and therapies to outpatients.
7. Conducts and attends training and treatment review seminars to ensure that all staff are adequately trained and informed of new techniques, therapies, or resources.
8. Completes, petitions, and testifies at mental health hearings as a Qualified Mental Health Professional.
9. Performs other work as assigned.

**D. Reporting Relationships:**

Typically no subordinates report to this position, but the incumbent may provide work direction to direct care staff.

**E. Challenges and Problems:**

Challenges include finding adequate funding and placement for patients due to the wide range of problems and personalities.

Problems include getting reliable information from unreliable or unwilling patients and families, communities who are unwilling to accept certain clients.

**F. Decision-making Authority:**

Decisions include developing individual therapy techniques; curriculum and format of treatments; discharge plans; financial needs; need for family contact; where to obtain finances, clothing, and health care; sanctions on negative behavior; relevant social history information; and appropriate topics, time, and place for in-service training.

Decisions referred include general treatments as established by the consensus of the treatment team, policy and procedure development and interpretation, discharge dates, approval of leave requests, legal issues, ways to resolve department conflicts, medical problems, and treatment imperatives and program philosophies.

**G. Contact with Others:**

Daily contact with patients to assess and treat patients and treatment team to assess, inform, and collaborate; and regular and consistent contact with family members to inform them of the patient's progress and community mental health centers to develop and execute discharge planning.

**H. Working Conditions:**

The incumbent works in a typical office environment and on the ward areas with potentially violent, aggressive, hostile, mentally unstable patients.

**I. Knowledge, Skills and Abilities:**

Knowledge of:

- completing petitions for and testifying at mental health hearings;
- social and psychological assessments and treatment techniques;
- ethical standards, principles, and practices of social work, counseling, and human behavior;

- human growth and development and their relationship to social work principles and methods;
- current social, economic, and health trends and services, and the ability to adapt trends to practical program applications and link patients with services needed;
- interviewing and other information gathering techniques;
- state mental health practices and procedures;
- effective teaching techniques;
- record keeping.

Ability to:

- develop cooperative and satisfactory contacts with patients, relatives, physicians, social agencies, community officials, and other administrative officials;
- apply proper interviewing techniques;
- write meaningful, concise, and accurate reports and correspondence;
- establish and maintain effective working relationships with diverse populations;
- communicate effectively with a wide variety of people;
- assess social service needs, complete social assessments and social histories, and identify programs or services sufficient to meet those needs;
- restrain combative patients;
- develop effective therapy curriculum;
- be patient and understanding;
- speak to groups;
- negotiate with various agencies;
- testify in mental health hearings as a Qualified Mental Health Professional.